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ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL

of the

CITY SWISS CLUB

on

FRIDAY, 15th OCTOBER, 1948 at the DORCHESTER HOTEL, PARK LANE, W.I

In the Chair : R. de CINTRA, President.

After a lapse of ten eventful years, the 83rd Annual Banquet and Ball of the City Swiss Club took place at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1, on Friday, October 15th, 1948.

Had it not been for the two wars, during which these functions were dispensed with, this Banquet would have been the 92nd; the City Swiss Club having been founded in 1856.

To make comparisons with regard to previous events or happenings is always a hazardous undertaking, as often the then ruling conditions are forgotten.

In spite of the gathering of the storm, the last Banquet of the City Swiss Club in 1938, at the Grosvenor House, was a brilliant affair, and all those who had been privileged to attend that function, at which many eminent guests were present, perhaps expected a similar display.

We live in an age of austerity, of restrictions of all kinds, and above all, the Chancellor of H.M. Exchequer, has skillfully managed to relieve us of almost all the spare cash with which to enjoy a little extra pleasure now and then. This may have been the cause of some of the "regulars" failing to attend, but considering everything the attendance of 260 can be deemed quite satisfactory.

If therefore any comparisons with former Banquets of the City Swiss Club should be found necessary, we must bear in mind the present conditions.

True enough this function, like many others, had an austerity complex, but never-the-less I hasten to say, that it was not the less enjoyable. To document the former assertion, I will state a few facts, starting with an item which plays no unimportant part in our daily life, namely "food".

This year's excellent Menu, well prepared and equally well served, consisted of "Le Suprême de Sole à l'Armoricaine; Le Poussin en Cocotte Bonne Maman, Les Petits Pois à la Française, Les Choux-fleurs Mornay, La Salade de Laitues à la Française; Les Reinettes Feuilletées Côte d'Azur, Le Biscuit Glacé Napolitain, Les Gaufrettes; Le Café.

My readers will agree that it compares but modestly with the Menu which was served ten years ago and which contained: Hors d'Oeuvres Varié, Saumon Fumé; Consommé Double au Perles du Nizam, Crème Reine, Suprême de Turbotin Persane; Blanc de Faisan Poêle Châtelaine, Céleries Braisés, Pommes Mignonettes; Sorbet au Kummel; Pâté de Foie Gras

Strasbourgeoise, Salade Rachel; Pêche Flambée au Kirsch, Parfaite Glacé Napolitain, Mignardises; Café.

A second item which comes under the same heading, were the speeches. Well do I remember the many occasions where the speech-making took between two and two and a half hours, much to the distress of many, especially the Ladies, who came to dance, and not to listen to oratorial outbursts, where, at times import and export figures from this country and visa-versa were endlessly related.

This year, the City Swiss Club has established a record, which I am sure, has in all its 83 years never before been achieved; the speeches, which I carefully timed, took exactly 18 minutes and twelve seconds, and all those who, year after year, turned red and then purple in their faces with impatience at having to listen to the various prolific orators, should be content, and to prove, that it was appreciated at least, by some, I might mention, that one charming young Lady told me, that although she did not hear a word what was said, the speeches were most enjoyable, because they were "short and sweet." Perhaps some of us "older hands," although in favour of short speeches, would have liked to have heard a few "weightier" things said.

Thirdly the list of English guests was drastically curtailed, which in a way is to be regretted, as we would have liked to show our English friends what fine specimens we really are, but the Exchequer of the Club has also its limits.

Having said all this, I will venture to give an account of a function which, in spite of several unavoidable restrictions, was never-the-less a success.

Previous to the dinner, the President of the Club, Mr. R. de Cintra, accompanied by his charming daughter, Mlle. G. de Cintra, received the visitors in the Foyer.

They were then promptly ushered by the red coated Toast Master to the various bars where beverages of all kinds were displayed.

Here, one was able to admire the elegant toilettes of the Ladies; and especially sweet were the many younger Ladies in their crinoline type frocks, it was a picture which gladdened the eye. That everyone felt happy was proved by the animated conversations which were being held in several languages. One could hear the eloquent French, the melodious language of our Ticinesi, "Schwyzerdütsch" and, of course, English. I am sure there are few gatherings held in this great Metropolis where so many tongues were spoken.

The company then made its entry into the richly decorated Banqueting Hall — where the floral decorations and attractive Menu cards carried out in scarlet and white on the numerous tables were much admired — they awaited up-standing the entry of the President and the principal guest, Dr. A. Escher, Chargé d'Affaires, who represented the Swiss Minister, Monsieur Henry de Torrenté, who, owing to his being still in Switzerland, was unable to be present. His absence at this first Banquet of the Club after the war was universally regretted. Another notable absentee was the famous banner of the City Swiss Club, which was, a good many years ago, presented to the Club by the Ladies of the members. It survived the bombing and fire during the war, but came to an inglorious end, having been eaten by moths, it was, however suitably replaced, for the time being, by a Swiss Flag, which the Swiss sports contingent taking part in this year's Olympic Games brought to London.

After Grace was said by Pasteur C. Reverdin, the company sat down to an excellent dinner, for which both the Management and the Chef of the Dorchester Hotel is to be congratulated.

Towards the end of the dinner the Toast-Master claimed silence for the customary Toasts, given by the Chairman, the first being to H.M. The King, followed by the one to the President of the Swiss Confederation and the Federal Council, both toasts were enthusiastically responded to.

Then followed the speeches, which, as I have already mentioned, were exceedingly short. The first one was delivered by the President of the City Swiss Club, Mr. R. de Cintra, who extended a warm welcome to all the visitors saying, that after a number of troublesome years, the City Swiss Club, was happy to resume at last again the Annual Banquets, which have always been such an event in the Colony. Regretting

the absence of the Minister and Madame de Torrenté, he extended a hearty welcome to Monsieur A. Escher, Chargé d'Affaires, and in concluding expressed the hope, that everyone would spend a few enjoyable hours.

The President was followed by the principal guest of the evening, Monsieur A. Escher, who, in "Schwyzerdütsch" delivered the greetings of the Swiss Minister, who, he said, was unavoidably detained in Switzerland and thus unable to attend; he also mentioned that his colleague, Monsieur E. de Graffenreid, Commercial Counsellor was, owing to illness, unable to be present.

The speaker referred to his first contact which he had the pleasure to make with the City Swiss Club, some seventeen years ago at the Mayfair Hotel. He associated himself with the President in wishing the gathering a pleasant and enjoyable evening.

Mr. de Cintra then, on behalf of the Club, extended a cordial welcome to the numerous official guests, naming them as follows:—

Dr. A. Escher, Chargé d'Affaires, Madame E. v. Graffenreid, Monsieur and Madame V. Umbrecht, Mr. and Mrs. C. Campart, representing the Société de Secours Mutuals, Mr. and Mrs. W. Meier, President of the Swiss Mercantile Society, Mr. E. Steiner, President of the Swiss Council, Mr. and Mrs. C. Berti, President of the Unione Ticinese, Dr. and Mrs. H. W. Egli, President of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, Mr. R. Dupraz, Hon. Vice-President of the Swiss Benevolent Society, Mr. E. Siegrist, President of the "Schweizerbund," Mr. and Mrs. O. Wuest, President of the Swiss Club, Birmingham, Pasteur and Madame C. Reverdin, Miss H. Vischer, Mr. and Mrs. A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer," Mrs. C. Bolla, President of The Rutli Club, Mr. M. N. Clarke and Mr. F. R. Crepin, representing the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club. (Pasteur and Madame H.



Mr. R. de Cintra (President) addressing the gathering.

Blum and Father Lanfranchi were unavoidably prevented from attending.

Although not an official guest, the President greeted the presence of Madame Buchi, wife of the Swiss Consul in Cape Town, at present in London pending her return to South Africa. He also mentioned that Lieut.-Colonel J. G. Ryser and Dr. F. Rothenbuhler of the Swiss Legation were present.

It has been an age long tradition in the City Swiss Club to "battre un ban de cœur" for the Ladies, a task which the President undertook; it was somehow amusing to note that some of the Gentlemen did not have the faintest idea on which side this most useful organ of the human body has its abode, some tapped the wrong side, whilst others gaily clapped when they ought to have tapped their manly bosoms. I have heard of the saying, that, on some occasions the heart jumps into one's mouth, but I have never yet seen it jump "quite clear" into one's hands.

This compliment to the Ladies, was blushingly acknowledged.

Concluding his address to the guests, Mr. de Cintra asked the members to drink to their health. The task to say "Thank you very much" was entrusted to Mr. N. Clarke, General Secretary of the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club. On behalf of the guests he thanked the President for the generous hospitality extended to them, recalling at the same time, being a mountaineer, some of the experiences when climbing some of the high peaks in our country. He also mentioned the happy and close relations which always existed between his Association and the City Swiss Club.

The next and last speaker was Mr. R. Dupraz, Hon. Vice-President of the Swiss Benevolent Society, who briefly related the splendid work his Society is doing, for our less fortunate countrymen, who, often

through no fault of their own, have fallen on evil days, he made a touching appeal for support and that his words did not fall on deaf ears was proved by the result of the collection which reached the highly satisfactory amount of £100.0.0.

The official part of the evening thus came to an end, and after a short interval dancing started. Arthur Salisbury and his orchestra provided the dance music very efficiently and untiringly. Their alluring tunes did not only entice the youngsters on to the dance floor but many of the more "portly" couples, who had thought that their "dancing days were over."

Paul Jones's, valses, polkas, and many of the more recent dances followed each other at a bewildering pace, and you should have seen, how some of the older generation "raced about" when the orchestra started playing "Swiss Waltzes"; forgotten were aches and pains it was just a wild orgy of revellery.

To enable the dancers to get their breath and to get them ready for a new "assault," a cabaret was introduced, which started with a turn by the Marquis Trio, which can best be described as two Gentlemen in knee breeches and powdered wigs throwing about wildly a very young Lady very scantily dressed (austerity again). Judging from her smiling face, the Lady in question seemed to enjoy the "flinging"; we all can do a bit of "throwing about" but the art, no doubt, rests in the "catching," and it is there, where some of us, who wish to imitate the act, might go wrong. It was "Folies Bergère" at its best, with regard to the "costume" of the young Lady, if it can be called thus. Some anxious Lady, mother of a very young son, whispered into my ear, that such performances are the reason "why boys leave home," but what about "older" ones?

The next turn consisted of a young couple, more substantially dressed, Downey and Day, doing hair-



Mr. R. Dupraz, making his appeal for the Swiss Benevolent Society.

raising stunts on roller skates. The speed with which they turned and twisted was bewildering, and I am sure, the "inside" of the young Lady must eventually become somewhat mixed up.

The cabaret came to its conclusion with the Three Bentley Sisters executing in perfect harmony (with one or two slips) classical dancing, and then suddenly becoming towards the end less "classical" with the turning of somersaults.

It was altogether an enjoyable diversion, after which dancing was resumed and went gaily and happily on until 2 a.m. when this first "Austerity Banquet" of the City Swiss Club came to a close with the singing of :

" Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And days of auld lang Syne?"

ST.

* * *

Apart from those already mentioned, the following were present :—

Mr. & Mrs. W. Bachmann, Mr. & Mrs. G. Bartholdi, Mr. W. Baumgartner, Mr. & Mrs. G. Berenger, Mr. & Mrs. F. Beyli and Party, Major F. Bieri and Guest, Mr. & Mrs. H. Bingguelly, Mrs. A. Blackwell, Mr. & Mrs. O. Boehringer, Mr. C. Bolla, Mrs. Buchi, Miss E. Chapuis, Mr. and Mrs. L. Chapuis and Guests, Mr. & Mrs. Ch. Chapuis, Mr. & Mrs. W. Deutsch, Mr. J. A. Donat and Party, Mr. & Mrs. Dreyfus, Miss P. Dunant, Miss B. J. Ernst, Mr. & Mrs. O. Ernst, Mr. E. Fankhauser and Party, Mr. & Mrs. Ch. Fer, Mr. & Mrs. W. Fischer and Party, Mr. & Mrs. W. Flory and Party, Mr. & Mrs. O. Frei and Party, Mr. & Mrs. E. A. Grau and Party, Mr. & Mrs. O. Grob, Mr. & Mrs. Ch. Gysin, Miss Gysin, Mr. & Mrs. P. Haberstich, Miss Y. Haberstich, Mr. & Mrs. B. Hart, Mr. & Mrs. L. Haussauer, Mr. & Mrs. W. E. Hauwyler, Mr. C. Huggins, Mr. & Mrs. L. Jobin and Party, Mr. & Mrs. R. J. Keller and Party, Mr. & Mrs. R. Marchand and Party, Mr. & Mrs. F. A. Martin and Guest, Miss June Martin, Mr. K. Maurer, Mr. H. E. Messmer and Party, Mr. & Mrs. J. Miller, Mr. & Mrs. P. A. Moehr, Mr. & Mrs. J. Pfaundler, Miss R. Pfaundler, Mr. & Mrs. R. F. Phillips, Mr. P. Phillips, Dr. H. Rast, Lt-Col. J. G. Rieser and Party, Mr. & Mrs. F. Rohr, Mr. & Mrs. O. Rohn, Monsieur F. Rothenbuhler, Mr. & Mrs. J. M. Rueff, Mr. & Mrs. Ch. Seinet, Mr. & Mrs. F. Schmid and Party, Miss de Schulthess, Mr. E. Steiner and Party, Mr. H. Steiner and Party, Mr. & Mrs. E. Ullmann, Mr. W. A. de Vigier, Mr. & Mrs. H. E. Watson, Mr. R. de Watteville and Party, Mr. & Mrs. A. Widmer, and Party, Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Willi and Party, Miss Wisard, Dr. P. de Wolff.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Our next issue will be published on Friday, November 12th, 1948.

We take the opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donations over and above their subscriptions : H. Muller, Ch. Fer, R. de Cintra, V. Gay, G. Pape, Mrs. A. E. Blackwell, A. Gerschwiler, B. B. Apelbaum, W. Fischer, Mrs. Ingham Whitaker, P. Walser, J. J. Huber, E. A. Mermod.

SWISS CHILDREN'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY.

We have much pleasure in informing the parents and friends of the *Swiss Colony's children*, that we have been able to make the necessary arrangements for their Annual Christmas Party on the First Saturday in the new year, at the Victoria Halls, Bloomsbury Square, W.C.1.

The many pleasant memories of the past years will no doubt encourage our many friends to help us again on that occasion, thus making it a success.

The older generations of our compatriots here in London, can recollect that since 1909, thousands of their children (426 in 1933) have formed one great family, united in the Christian faith of their forefathers, and in the deep love of the homeland.

During the last hostilities, that beneficial activity had to be suspended, the risks being too great.

As before, a small Committee of ladies and gentlemen, has taken the matter in hand, but of course, the difficulties are considerable at the moment, the conditions have changed, and now, *the names and addresses of all children up to the age of 15 are needed*.

Thus, we shall be grateful if the parents will forward the necessary informations as soon as possible, to enable us to ascertain the number of children wishing to attend; please send all particulars, age, etc., to *Miss Ida Matthey, 102, Hornsey Lane, N.6.*

Further, many will remember that yearly "little Black Book" travelling from hand to hand in our Colony, always so very kindly received, obviously still young in spirit, perhaps older physically, but doing its job all the same, and we are certain, that new and former supporters will not fail to assist.

Small donations, Postal Orders and Cheques will be thankfully received and acknowledged by Mr. C. Campart, 33, Heathfield Park, Willesden Lane, N.W.2; you will not forget, will you? "the more the merrier."

To all our best thanks!

THE COMMITTEE.

The Rutli Club

will hold a

DANCE

from 7 p.m. to 11.30 p.m.

on WEDNESDAY, 24th NOVEMBER, 1948

at

SEYMORE HALL,
SEYMORE PLACE, BRYANSTON SQUARE, W.I

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